UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY Civil Action No. 08-142

In Regard to the Matter of:

Bayside State Prison Opinion and Report

Litigation

Of the

Special Master

LESLIE KNORDLE,

-vs-

WILLIAM H. FAUVER, et al, Defendants.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2008

BEFORE THE HONORABLE JOHN W. BISSELL, SPECIAL MASTER

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1		
2	Transcript of proceedings in the above	
3	matter taken by Theresa O. Mastroianni, Certified	
4	Court Reporter, license number 30X100085700, and	
5	Notary Public of the State of New Jersey at the	
6	United States District Court House, One Gerry Flaza,	
7	Camden, New Jersey, 08102, commencing at 9:30 AM.	
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20	MASTROIANNI & FORMAROUI, INC.	
	Certified Court Reporting & Videoconferencing	
21	251 South White Horse Pike	
	Audubon, New Jersey 08106	
22	856-546-1100	
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		Page 3
1	APPEARANCES:	
2		
3	LOUGHRY & LINDSAY, ESQUIRES	
	BY: LAWRENCE W. LINDSAY, ESQUIRE	
4	330 MARKET STREET	
	CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY 08102	
5	856-968-9201	
	ATTORNEYS FOR THE PLAINTIFFS	
6		
7		
	ROSELLI & GRIEGEL, PC	
8	BY: MARK ROSELLI, ESQUIRE	
	- and -	
9	BY: KENNETH W. LOZIER, ESQUIRE	
	1337 STATE HIGHWAY 33	
10	HAMILTON SQUARE, NEW JERSEY 08690	
	609-586-2257	
11	ATTORNEYS FOR THE DEFENDANTS	
12		
13		
14		
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- JUDGE BISSELL: The Special Master at
- 2 this time is opening matters for a bench decision.
- 3 The following constitutes the Special Master's
- 4 determination regarding the complaint of Leslie
- 5 Knordle, docket number 08-142.
- 6 This opinion/report is being issued
- 7 pursuant to the directives of the Order of Reference
- 8 to a Special Master and the Special Master's
- 9 Agreement and the guiding principles of law which
- 10 underlie this decision to be applied to the facts
- 11 upon which it is based as set forth in the jury
- 12 instructions in the Walker and Mejias jury charges to
- 13 the extent applicable to the allegations of Mr.
- 14 Knordle's case.
- 15 As finalized after review under Local
- 16 Civil Rule 52.1, the transcript of this oral opinion
- 17 will constitute the written report required by
- 18 paragraph seven of the Order of Reference to a
- 19 Special Master.
- 20 At the time the lockdown began, Leslie
- 21 Knordle was a resident of E Unit. On July 31st,
- 22 1997, E Unit was taken to the gym so that officers
- 23 could search that unit. Leslie Knordle was marched
- 24 in line on the way to the gym and he describes the

25

- events of that trip in part at least. At pages 167
- 2 and 168 of the transcript of proceedings on February
- 3 15th, 2008.
- 4 As he describes it, the next morning,
- 5 and that's July 31st, the 50G unit came through the E
- 6 Unit and let's say had us come out of our cells to
- 7 escort us to the gym. While escorting us to the gym
- 8 one officer had me with the PR-24 in like a chicken
- 9 wing behind my back. Even though we were handcuffed,
- 10 he tells me look at this other officer and tell him
- 11 you're sorry. I go to look at the other officer to
- 12 my right. He comes across my face with another PR-24
- 13 also. At that time, right, I didn't see his face or
- 14 anything like that. At that time the officer that
- 15 had me in the chicken wing that was escorting me over
- 16 there, right, picked me up off the ground because 1
- 17 had dropped from the hit and picked me up and started
- 18 calling me all kind of derogatory names and so on and
- 19 so forth to the gym.
- 20 There is a further discussion of that
- 21 incident at pages 173 through 181. I'm not going to
- 22 quote it all, but beginning at page 173: When you
- 23 were first taken out of E Unit were you given any
- 24 instructions as to what you should do when walking
- 25 through the gauntlet?

Page 6 1 Answer: Keep your head pointed 2 downwards and towards the ground. 3 Now, as you were walking through the 4 gauntlet, the SOCs that were on both sides, what, if anything, were they doing? 5 6 Answer: Saying whatever they felt like saying to you. Trying to antagonize you. I believe 7 8 they was trying to intimidate you to get you to make 9 a move so they could do whatever they wanted to do to 10 you. 11 Skipping a bit to page 175: At some 12 point you mentioned something about being told to say 13 something to another officer. Let's go through that 14 again. Answer: Officer to my left in the 15 gauntlet, right, told me to look off to the officer 16 17 to the right and tell him I'm sorry. The officer 18 that had me in the PR-24 with the chicken wing turned 19 my body this way because he had control of it. 20 Turned it to the right. And as I did that the 21 officer that was standing right there in the gauntlet -- from the gauntlet came across my face. I 22 23 dropped. 24 Further questioning at page 176: And 25 where did he hit you with the baton?

		Page	7	4000000		
1	Answer: Across the eye.					
2	Skipping some intervening testimony to					
3	the bottom of page 177: As a result of being struck					
4	with the PR-24 just to the outside of your left eye,			San		
5	what, if anything, happened to that area where you			0.0000000000000000000000000000000000000		
6	were hit?			200000000000000000000000000000000000000		
7	Answer: It was busted open.					
8	Bleeding?					
9	Yes, it was.			Parameter Section		
10	Indicated he still had scarring in that					
11	area and I noted the presence of such a scar while he			1000		
12	testified here before me.			88 00000		
13	He also testified to one other incident			0.000		
14	occurring in the gym to him and that testimony			Section and a		
15	appears at page 168 as follows: As we were sitting					
16	up in the gym, we were told to sit in this position					
17	for a certain amount of time and it was a position					
18	that was very, very uncomfortable and if you moved,					
19	you know, they told you if you moved something was			38 C C S C A C		
20	going to happen to you. I moved a couple of times					
21	that was very, very uncomfortable and if you moved, you know, they told you if you moved something was going to happen to you. I moved a couple of times because, like I said, it was a very strenuous position. And they came across my neck a couple of times, two or three times. I believe it was three limes I got hit across the back of my neck. I find that as far as the second					
22	position. And they came across my neck a couple of			I say the say		
23	times, two or three times. I believe it was three			The second second		
24	limes I got hit across the back of my neck.			0.0000000000000000000000000000000000000		
25	I find that as far as the second			200000000000000000000000000000000000000		

- I incident in the gym is concerned that that is not
- 2 actionable conduct. He disobeyed a standing and
- 3 well-known order to remain perfectly still. I find,
- 4 frankly, that the use of a baton under these
- 5 circumstances and to that rather modest amount is not
- 6 actionable. He was disobeying an order and some
- 7 acceptable level of corporal response is and was
- 8 appropriate.
- 9 There was also some testimony about a
- 10 shower incident in this matter. As I recall it, I
- ll don't find that actionable either.
- 12 However, with regard to the events in
- 13 the line or gauntlet on the way to the gym, I find
- 14 that that does constitute the use of excessive force
- 15 without any valid penalogical purpose in a sadistic
- 16 fashion. And I'm paraphrasing to some extent the
- 17 recitation of the standards of Eighth Amendment
- 18 actions as set forth in the jury instructions which,
- 19 as I said, are already incorporated here.
- 20 What we had in this situation literally
- 21 was setting this guy up. The guards were playing
- 22 with him. He's under the control of a quard in line,
- 23 the guard on the left side of the line says turn to
- 24 the man across from you and apologize to him. And
- 25 not only -- he doesn't even do it voluntarily, but

- 1 he's twisted in that direction by the guard who has
- 2 him under control. And then the man on the right
- 3 side of the line basically says, hey, you violated an
- 4 order, you're supposed to look forward and keep your
- 5 head down and belts him across the face.
- I find that is credible testimony,
- 7 I find nothing in the evidence here to indicate that
- 8 that did not happen. Some of the other testimony
- 9 I've heard here from time to time about incessant
- 10 beatings, 20, 30, 40, 50 blows or something like
- 11 that, frankly, is not credible for a number of
- 12 reasons and I've dealt with it from time to time in
- 13 the past. However, here this type of rather quick,
- 14 but painful and completely unjustifiable incident
- 15 has, indeed, a ring of truth to it, particularly when
- 16 we're considering it's July 31st, only a day after
- 17 the murder of Officer Baker.
- 18 I want to revisit the shower incident
- 19 just briefly. His testimony about that was that he
- 20 was placed into a shower, turned the water on, al! he
- 21 got was scalding water which burned his legs.
- 22 The evidence as I've analyzed it does
- 23 not indicate any intentional infliction of pain. At
- 24 most, this would be considered some sort of
- 25 negligence, if you will, on behalf of the officer

- l in not getting him out of there quickly enough.
- 2 More likely basically just an accident. I have no
- 3 reason to believe, for instance, that this was any
- 4 use of an implement of torture.
- 5 Now, the injury inflicted in the
- 6 assault was not particularly serious or long-lasting.
- 7 It left a minor residual scar. There was minor
- 8 bleeding which stopped rather promptly.
- 9 Nevertheless, the injuries, though modest are
- 10 certainly recoverable. Thus, I find and will
- 11 recommend the award of a compensatory damages of 35
- 12 hundred dollars. I do not find the basis for
- 13 punitive damages and I will elaborate upon that at
- 14 this time.
- To reiterate, the act of manipulating
- 16 Mr. Knordle in this manner in order that he could be
- 17 struck, allegedly, for disobeying an order when, in
- 18 fact, that was far from the case, and striking of him
- 19 under the circumstances goes well beyond the
- 20 necessity of any proper law enforcement needs or any
- 21 proper exercise of discipline or any other legitimate
- 22 penalogical purpose as well defined in the jury
- 23 instructions which I've incorporated here. It was
- 24 indeed excessive, unnecessary and sadistic force
- 25 imposed upon Mr. Knordle within the comtemplation of

Page 11 1 those legal principles. However, in light of the 2 fact that the striking of Mr. Knordle was not 3 prolonged or repeated, while actionable for recovery of compensatory damages, I do not find that this assault visited upon him rose to the level of being 5 6 so egregious as to support a claim for punitive 7 damages, at least as against the unidentified officers that were with him and the ones who 8 9 inflicted his injury. 10 Finally, although not every item of 11 evidence has been discussed in this opinion/report, all evidence presented to the Special Master was 12 13 reviewed and considered. I find that the injury 14 inflicted here is actionable. I find that the injury was acute initially; however, no permanency has 15 16 remained from it other than the presence of a rather 1.7 modest scar. 18 Accordingly, I recommend in this report that the district court enter an award of 19 20 compensatory damages in the amount of three thousand 21 five hundred dollars in Mr. Knordle's favor. 22 23 24

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Page 12 1 CERTIFICATE 2 1, Theresa O. Mastroianni, a Notary Public and 3 4 Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of New 5 Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as 7 taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place, and on the date hereinbefore set forth. 8 9 I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a 10 relative nor employed nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither 11 12 a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, 1.3 and that I am not financially interested in the action. 14 15 16 17 18 Theresa O. Mastroianin 19 Theresa O. Mastrojanni, C.S.R. 20 Notary Public, State of New Jersey My Commission Expires May 5, 2010 21 Certificate No. XIO857 Date: April 29, 2008 22 23 24 25

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